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South Glastonbury, CT 06073

March 14, 2023

Connecticut General Assembly  
Education Committee  
300 Capitol Avenue | Hartford, CT 06106

Dear members of the Education Committee,

I am writing today to share my opposition to S.B. 1199. As former elementary public-school educator for ten years, the NCLB years, and now an associate professor of elementary education at Central Connecticut State University, I understand what this bill aims to do, yet there are concerns within the bill I will briefly address.

The bill's aim is to increase diversity, ethnic, racial, linguistic, in the profession. While laudable and important, the bill does not rectify the issue. The bill will increase alternate route to certification programs and increase teacher residency programs; these are all taking from Teach for America, which has many problems, and all it takes is one to do some critical research and talk with scholars who study TFA and alternate routes, who critique the issues with these programs, especially the lack of diversifying the profession and supporting minoritized youth in schools. While I am for a teacher residency program, I am unsure why university teacher preparation programs are left out. When I have reviewed what is taught in one, the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program ([https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hPhtWhJQmPcSizoluohtn\\_iakYZygh5pkyHpnLXmOw8/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hPhtWhJQmPcSizoluohtn_iakYZygh5pkyHpnLXmOw8/edit)) so much academic content is left out as are in-depth studies of content, of diversity, of foundations of education and schooling, or is done in tandem when student teaching which is a rigorous and intense endeavor, leaving little time to fully absorb and know what is being learned. Very little time is spent on these topics and can lead to greater burnout, or a greater reliance on corporate scripted curricula, deficit ideology, and behaviorist modes of "controlling" students in classes—regardless if one's teacher identity is similar to their students' identity. As a gay male, I know representation matters, and as a former elementary school teacher I know the power of my identity to those families and children I taught, but I had to learn what it meant to be a teacher, learn from scholars who spent time on what I would confront in the profession, rather than being rushed to get through a program.

Further, by granting recommender power to local school districts, this leaves out and guts traditional teacher preparation programs, who are filled by scholars of education, scholars who have a greater understanding of the myriad complexities of the profession; many of us are former public-school teachers or have, at the least, gone through traditional teacher preparation programs. While we are not perfect in traditional teacher preparation, we have a strong base, where former students keep coming back sharing how much they learned and use in their classes, especially the work related to academic content and how we learned ways to support diverse

students, pushing back on deficit ideologies. I would like the state to help bolster, not circumvent, the work we do to support all students in Connecticut.

I implore all of you to reach out to educators and those in teacher preparation programs around the state, not just a select few who have political power, political connections, or those who have a vested interest beyond the collective goal of teacher preparation for a rigorous and complex profession. I invite all members of the committee, those shaping policy, to meet with those of us on the ground in teacher preparation, those of us with teaching and education backgrounds, those of us who have a much fuller and robust knowledge base of teaching, learning, schooling, and educating.

Thank you for your time reading my testimony.

Saluti,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael D. Bartone', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael D. Bartone, Ph.D.